

REMARKS

Applicants, by the amendments presented above, have made a concerted effort to present claims which more clearly define over the prior art of record, and thus to place this case in condition for allowance. Currently, claims 1-14 are pending. Claims 8-14 are newly-presented.

Priority

Applicants advise the Examiner that the Certified Copy of the priority document was submitted on December 29, 2005. Acknowledgment of the completion of the priority claim is requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,532,961 to Kwok. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims in view of the amendments made herein is requested.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to specify "a width of the bridge member at a region where the forehead rest is mounted is substantially no greater than any other region of the bridge member thereby allowing a substantially unrestricted view for a user's eyes." Support for this amendment is found in the sentence bridging pages 5 and 6 wherein the bridge member is said to be "narrow with parallel sides" and the paragraph starting at line 8 of page 6. Figures 7 and 8 also clearly show an embodiment of the mask where the width of the bridge member 532 at apex 546 (which is the region of the bridge member at which cushion 560 is attached) is no wider than

the any other region of the bridge member. Applicant has also made some other minor clarifying changes to claims 1, 4 and 5.

As mentioned in the background art section of the present description, it is crucial in this field to minimize or eliminate any possible reason that a user may have for removing or avoiding wearing the interface. This feature of the invention provides the advantage that the user's line of sight is much less restricted than the conventional "T"-shaped bridge member shown as the prior art in Figure 9 of the present application and in Kwok. Even though the prior art "T"-shaped structures are positioned above the level of the user's eyes, because they protrude from the user's forehead they extend into and block a substantial proportion of the user's line of sight to a certain degree, depending upon the height of the user's nasal region and forehead slope.

Therefore, Applicant submits that amended claim 1 is not anticipated and is not rendered obvious by Kwok. Reconsideration and allowance is requested.

Newly-Presented Claims 8-14

Claim 8 is newly-presented and describes the attachment points for headgear as being mounted on the bridge member opposite to, and having a smaller width than, the forehead rest. This feature is supported by the paragraph starting at line 8 of page 6 and drawing figures 7 and 8 and provides a significantly less bulky and intrusive mask than the prior art. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 8 is allowable. In addition, claim 8 is dependent upon claim 1 which Applicants submit is in condition for allowance. Entry, consideration and allowance of claim 8 is requested.

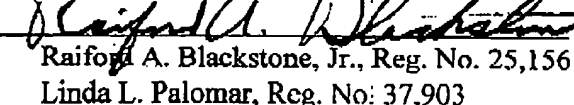
New independent claim 9 has also been added which is effectively original claim 1 combined with new claim 8, but without the newly-added requirement of claim 1 concerning the width of the bridge member. Support for this claim is provided by the paragraph starting at line 8 of page 6 and figures 7 and 8 of the drawings. As claimed, the attachment points for headgear are mounted on the bridge member opposite to, and having a smaller width than, the forehead rest. This feature is supported by the paragraph starting at line 8 of page 6 and drawing figures 7 and 8 and provides a significantly less bulky and intrusive mask than the prior art. Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 9 is allowable. Entry, consideration and allowance of claim 8 is requested.

Claims 10-14 are dependent upon claim 9 which Applicants submit is in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 10-14 correspond to claims 2-4, 6 and 7. Entry, consideration and allowance of claims 10-14 is requested.

In view of the above Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the application are allowable over the rejections of the Examiner. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this Amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact one of the undersigned attorneys at (312) 704-1890.

Respectfully submitted,

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